United Nations S/2018/376

Security Council

Distr.: General
23 April 2018
English
Original: Arabic

Letter dated 19 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I am writing to you in response to the groundless accusations set out in the identical letters dated 7 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the Security Council (S/2018/207) concerning an incident involving a Qatari fishing boat that occurred on 19 January 2018.

The United Arab Emirates categorically rejects and deplores the completely false allegations that were made by the Government of Qatar, and profoundly regrets that Qatar continues to fabricate allegations such as those that were made in the above-mentioned letter and in other communications that Qatar had addressed to the United Nations previously, in an attempt to cover up and divert attention from its violations of international law. It is a matter of concern that Qatar has sought, this time, to implicate the nationals of a State with which the United Arab Emirates maintain strong ties. These ongoing reckless actions on the part of Qatar run counter to the principles governing friendly relations between States and good-neighbourliness, and they will undoubtedly have an adverse effect on the interests of the States of the region and on regional and international peace and security.

The United Arab Emirates reiterates that it is fully committed to presenting substantiated facts, and that its conduct is consistent with relevant domestic and international law. It is my pleasure to transmit herewith a map that clarifies the facts set out below concerning the incident that occurred on 19 January 2018.

- At precisely 0841 hours local time on 19 January 2018, the Critical Infrastructure and Coastal Protection Authority of the United Arab Emirates observed an unidentified vessel outside the exclusive economic zone of the United Arab Emirates at coordinates 25° 16.92 N, 52° 44.12 E.
- At precisely 0844 hours local time, the unidentified vessel entered the exclusive economic zone of the United Arab Emirates. The vessel, which was not clearly flying the flag of its country of registration, was observed heading 140° south-east towards the territorial waters of the United Arab Emirates and Das Island. The unidentified vessel then entered the territorial waters of the United Arab Emirates and headed 140° south-east towards Das Island.
- In accordance with the powers and rights of coastal States under customary international law, the Critical Infrastructure and Coastal Protection Authority exercised the right to board and inspect the unidentified vessel, which was

intercepted at precisely 0855 hours local time in the territorial waters of the United Arab Emirates, some 5 nautical miles from Das Island (coordinates 25° 08.535 N, 52° 46.598 E).

- It was determined that the vessel was a Qatari fishing boat named *Bilad* (registration No. 17074). The fishing boat's crew consisted of seven sailors who are not Qatari nationals. The boat's captain was not present when it was intercepted. The boat was detained and its seven-person crew were arrested for violating maritime law and the rules governing fishing in the United Arab Emirates, including article 40 of Federal Act No. 23 (1999) on exploitation, protection and development of living aquatic resources in the United Arab Emirates.

The fishing boat was seized and its crew members were tried and convicted pursuant to the laws, regulations and procedures that are in effect in the United Arab Emirates and in accordance with fair trial standards. The position of the boat at the time that it was intercepted, the quantity of fish found on board, the geographical coordinates in the boat's navigation device and the confessions made by the crew members prove beyond any doubt that the laws of the United Arab Emirates were violated. The United Arab Emirates has followed all the procedures pertaining to notifying the consulate of the sailors' State of nationality and enabling the consulate to communicate with the boat's crew.

The United Arab Emirates hopes that the Government of Qatar will stop making unsubstantiated allegations and fabricating allegations to implicate other States, in order to divert attention from its violations of the rules of international law.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Lana Zaki **Nusseibeh**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 19 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council